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certain that he was more interested in English literature than has been generally recognized.<sup>14</sup>

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## THE RIMES OF STEFAN GEORGE

Although the battle over the significance of Stefan George in the development of the modern German lyric has not yet been ended, some critics such as Zwymann<sup>1</sup> and Lewisohn<sup>2</sup> calling him the greatest living lyricist, and others again such as Koch<sup>3</sup> and Grummann<sup>4</sup> styling him a mere *poseur* and euphuist,<sup>5</sup> there is

<sup>14</sup>To the discussion of Burns's relations to England W. P. Ker has made an interesting contribution in the *Scottish Historical Review* for October, 1917. He points out that Burns had a great interest in history, but that he preferred English to Scottish, and that at the very time he was writing his most "Scottish" poems he was busily studying English history. Professor Ker further alludes to the fact that poems by Burns appeared in the *Annual Register*, and that Burns published both prose and verse in the *London Star*. The "Address to the Deil" and the "Dedication" are in the *Register* for 1787 (publ. 1789). The list of poems sent to London is not long, but is more considerable than Professor Ker indicates. To Peter Stuart's *Star* Burns sent the "Ode Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Oswald," "On the Duchess of Gordon's Reel-Dancing," "Ode on the Departed Regency Bill," "A New Song for the Kilmarnock Chapel," and the song, "Anna, thy Charms." To Mayne's *Star* he sent "The Whistle." To Lloyd's *Evening Post* went the "Elegy on the Departed Year"; to *St. James's Chronicle* the "Prologue for the Dumfries Theatre"; to the *Morning Chronicle* "Lines on a Banknote"; and to the *Gentleman's Magazine* the "Address to the Shade of Thomson." (For data, see notes to the *Centenary Burns*, under titles listed.)

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Zwymann, *Das Georgesche Gedicht*, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Lewisohn, *The Spirit of Modern German Literature*, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Vogt-Koch, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, II, 3d ed., 1910.

<sup>4</sup> Paul H. Grummann in *The German Classics*, XVIII, 288-289.

<sup>5</sup> Personally, I can not judge George as highly as Lewisohn or Zwymann, his admirer, who goes so far as to speak of the poet's readers only as *die Geniessenden*, nor, on the other hand, can I agree with Grummann, who makes him out to be almost a rank charlatan. A more unbiased opinion probably lies between these two extremes, for a poet who resorts to such striking artificialities and externalities as George does in order to frighten off *die Allzuvielen* can not be counted among the greatest artists, while,

general agreement that he is a master of form, the disagreement centering around the question as to how far his remarkable formalistic finesse will prove salutary and reformatory. In brief space I propose to consider one phase of George's formalism—his rimes—, my study being based upon his more recent and mature work *Der siebente Ring*.<sup>6</sup>

An examination of *Der siebente Ring* with regard to rime shows the following:—

1. George is not, in his more recent work, noticeably abandoning the rimed couplets *abab*, *aabb*, and *abba* in favor of the unrimed pentameter, as Taylor Starck's article<sup>7</sup> might suggest. To be sure, there is a considerable number of unrimed pentametric poems in the *Ring* (they comprise about 60 pages out of approximately 200), but this is due, it seems, more to the nature of the subject-matter treated than to any change in George's style.

2. Attention has rightly been called to George's remarkable facility for re-introducing into the language archaic forms, some of which have been out of use for centuries, and for using unusual words and words hitherto not found in German poetry. It is worth noting that a large percentage of these words, also of George's unusual compounds, is found at the end of a riming line, introduced for the manifest purpose of the rime, it being George's theory that a given rime should be used by a poet only once or at most seldom. And it appears that it is precisely this theory which contributes to the difficulty of George's language, compelling him, as it does, ever to seek new riming material. It is my distinct impression that as soon as George stops riming, and writes blank verse, he becomes less obscure, although his manner remains the same. Some of the obsolete and unusual words, as well as words hitherto not found in German poetry, used in the riming syllables of the *Ring*, together with the words with which they rime, are:—*erdenriefen*—*sternentiefen* (51);<sup>8</sup> *kafiller*—*fosforschiller* (51); *spille*—*stille* (51); *höhtet*—*rötet* (55); *sprenkel*—*schenkel* (58); *befelden*—*helden* (63); *schrunde*—*kunde* (73); *schrunde*—

on the other hand, his remarkable steadfastness of purpose and fidelity to ideals throughout thirty years stamp him as more than a mere *poseur*.

<sup>6</sup> 2d ed., Georg Bondi, Berlin, 1909.

<sup>7</sup> *M. L. N.*, January, 1919.

<sup>8</sup> The numbers refer to the pages of the 2nd ed. of the *Ring*.

*stunde* (146); *reffen* — *treffen* (80); *trestern* — *gestern* (88); *gefistel* — *mistel* (74); *sode* — *tode* (90); *swiseseln* — *kieseln* (91); *jug* — *zerschlug* (91); *zugewunken* — *funken* (107); *glinstern* — *finstern* (110); *glosen* — *rosen* (111); *fodre* — *lodre* (115); *seime* — *keime* (119); *eppich* — *teppich* (121); *gestaupt* — *haupt* (128); *arven* — *harfen* (135); *schlüften* — *lüften* (142); *gemässe* — *gefässe* (147); *ranft* — *sanft* (159); *schwaden* — *laden* (169); *brüsche* — *büsche* (174). George is especially fond of *ge-* compounds, which he derived to some extent directly from the Middle High German. Among the more unusual ones in the *Ring* are: — *gekrös* (used also by Schiller), *getön*, *geweide*, *geschmetter*, *gespinn*, *geschwele*, *geraum*, *geleucht*, *gestühl* (used also by J. H. Voss), *gebäu*, *gezüchte*, *geflimme*, *gewinde*, *gekling*, *geduft*.

3. Beside those rimes mentioned above, George finds many unusual ones in more usual words, some of them extremely bold and rarely used by predecessors. They are the rule in his lyrics, not the exception. Some of them are: — *zerriss* — *zerspliss* (63); *tiegel* — *spiegel* (78); *bitternisse* — *risse* (79); *firmamente* — *langgetrennte* (70); *siebten* — *geliebten* (109); *drommete* — *flehte* (114); *makel* — *mirakel* (114); *maser* — *faser* (119); *lack* — *strack* (120); *karneol* — *lebewohl* (126); *zinnober* — *oktober* (132); *gekicher* — *dämmerlicher* (132); *pachtung* — *umnachtung* (178); *dunkel* — *karfunkel* (151); *plane* — *enziane* (134). Taken out of their context, some of the more extreme rimes border on the ludicrous, but, of course, they never create this impression upon the serious reader of George.

4. That George is a consummate master of perfect rime, easily the equal of Platen and superior to Liliencron, can not justly be denied. The only instances of imperfect riming which I have found in the *Ring* are *umsonst* — *sonnst* (103); *weit* — *geweiht* (136); *lust* — *verlust* (177), but these cases may be intentional, for sometimes George deliberately lets words rime with themselves, as on pages 77, 104, 156 and 162. The rime *nächste* — *äzte* (103) is undoubtedly pure in the poet's pronunciation. Rarely does George allow the endings *-ung* and *-heit* alone to make a rime (*schwung* — *vergöttlichung*, 113; *felsensprung* — *dämmerung*, 131; *trunkenheit* — *bereit*, 137); usually the rime includes more (*weiten* — *ewigkeiten*, 113; *erscheinung* — *einung*, 118; *dämmerungen* — *durchdrungen*, 121). Rime extending over two or more

words is also rare (*pocht er—tochter*, 107; *weht es—beetes*, 160; *klingt es—beschwingt es*, 157). An unusual phenomenon is *grau und silbern—blau und silbern* (107). So conscientious a purist is George with regard to rime that even such rimes as *dräut—beut* (117) and *hain—wein* (56), involving diphthongs of different spellings, seem to be shunned wherever possible. Cases of internal elision of a vowel, usually *e*, for the sake of the rime, are rare (*loh'n—tron*, 52; *ruft—schuft*, 53). The *e* of the present infinitive is omitted or inserted in accordance with the requirements of the meter, often omitted (*wehn—sehn*, 111; *benedein—befrein*, 111; *lehn—geschehn*, 105; but *erkoren—geboren*, 105; *dorren—verworren*, 89).

5. George seems to make a point of riming the oblique cases of nouns frequently (*stückes—glückes*, 33; *wahnes—spanes*, 50; *krampe—dampfe*, 50); he also likes to rime different parts of speech, often in inflected form (*verschneiten—gezeiten*, 89; *takte—nackte*, 168; *scheins—eins*, 175; *verderbst—herbst*, 175).

6. In a few instances the poet uses semi-rimes, probably for the purpose of creating a folk-song impression. A good example of this practise is *Der Widerchrist* (56), where *garn—horn*; *reich—weicht*; *schein—seim*; *trog—hof* are apparently used as quasi-rimes. Another instance is found on page 183.

7. George uses both masculine and feminine rimes with equal facility, but he seems to have a predilection for the feminine type, as it affords him more freedom for practising his great rimic skill.

8. Complicated rime schemes, such as the one used on page 161 (*abcadcefbdf*), are not frequent.

9. Internal rimes are rare in the *Ring*. The poem *Litanei* (148) may be quoted as an example of such riming.

Quite apart from the question of their literary value, there can be no doubt that for the student of lexicology, metrics and rime the lyrics of Stefan George will some day offer a fruitful field of investigation.

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